

Busch Building
710 E Street, NW
Washington
District of Columbia

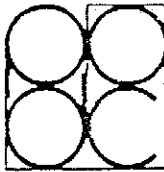
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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20013-7127



PENNSYLVANIA
AVENUE
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION

425 13TH STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, DC 20004

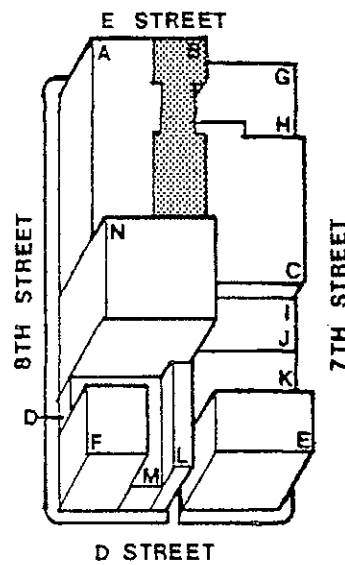
GENERAL CONSULTANTS

ANDERSON NOTTER/MARIANI
GENERAL PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION CONSULTANT
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DAVID MCLAREN HART & ASSOCIATES
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

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BUSCH BUILDING
710 E STREET, N.W.
LOT 805



GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Busch Building is located at 710 E Street on Lot 805 at the northern perimeter of Square 431. Rising six stories above its basement, the building's E Street facade is faced in red brick (now painted white) laid in running bond and accented by decorative trim of stone, pressed brick, and terra cotta. The most prominent feature of this facade is the central projecting bay which extends the full height of the building. The Busch Building is topped by an arcaded cornice.

The building measures approximately 59' wide by 116' deep. There are lightwells located on both east and west sides of the building which are hidden from pedestrian view. Recessed 32' from the E Street facade, these lightwells cut in 6' - 6" and extend south for 54', creating an I-form plan.

The structure of the Busch Building consists, for the most part, of load-bearing masonry exterior and interior walls spanned by wood floor joists. Apparently the upper two floors originally were supported by wood columns and girder which have since been replaced by iron columns and steel girders (Building Permit #2185, June 26, 1902). The basement also contains steel columns, although no permit exists for this work.

The interior bearing walls define a floor plan of three rooms each at the north and south ends of the building connected by a 65' long corridor. Partitions divide the space on each side of the corridor into several rooms. Against the east wall, just north of the building's center, is a stairway which ascends around an elevator shaft. This shaft may be original, as a 1902 building permit mentions repairs to an existing passenger elevator (Building Permit #105, July 16, 1902). An electric elevator was installed in 1913 (Building Permit #4544, March 20, 1913).

The basement and sixth floor vary from the typical plan: They are open. The fifth floor has been altered to accommodate two equal-sized rooms. The southernmost room houses a dining room and kitchen.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed in 1890 by Ed Abner, the Busch Building was apparently built as an office building for the Anheuser-Busch Brewing Association. It was subsequently occupied by a succession of federal offices, including the Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of Mines. In 1921 the building was annexed by the Lansburgh & Brothers Department Store for its administrative and advertising offices. It remained

a part of the Lansburgh's complex until the store closed in 1973, and has been vacant since that time.

Designed by architect Paul Schulze, the Busch Building illustrates the High Victorian Italianate style. Its use of flat and round arched windows encased in elaborate surrounds is characteristic of this particular Italianate style. The structure is compatible in size and scale with the adjacent Lansburgh's building and with many area structures, including the Tariff Commission Building across E Street. The verticality of the Busch Building's fenestration is comfortably juxtaposed with its horizontal banding and stringcourses, giving the structure a balanced massing which is very harmonious with other turn-of-the-century buildings in historic Washington.

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

Facade: The brick facade of the six-story Busch Building is divided vertically into three bays. The prominent projecting center bay carries windows on all three exposed sides. It meets the narrower rectangular central bay of the entry by a series of corbeled stone and brick courses at the sides. The central entryway, flanked by decorative brick piers, terminates with the stilted segmental arch characteristic of the High Victorian Italianate style. The storefront, which was added in 1926 (Building Permit #10950, 14 June 1926), has been boarded over.

All windows of the E Street facade are recessed. Second and third floor windows located in the first and third bays are set into segmentally arched openings; two windows per bay. Fourth, fifth and sixth floor windows located in the first and third bays are set into round-headed arched openings; three windows per bay. The second floor windows are two-over-two double-hung sash, while the remaining upper stories have one-over-one, double-hung sash windows. The second and third story windows are surmounted by a fixed, segmentally arched, two-light transom. Windows on the fourth and fifth floors are surmounted by a single, fixed, round-headed transoms. Sixth floor windows do not have transoms.

There are three different window types in the middle bay. The side faces of this projecting bay have windows set into openings with stone lintels. Second and third floor window groupings, located on the front face of the projecting bay, are set into large, segmentally arched openings. Within each opening there is one large rectangular window flanked on either side by a narrow window. Fourth, fifth and sixth floor windows located on the front face of the projecting bay are set into round headed arches; two per bay. All the windows of the projecting bay are one-over-one double-hung sash. The second and

third story windows on the front face of the projecting bay are surmounted by fixed tripartite transom lights. Fourth and fifth story windows on the same face of the bay are surmounted by fixed round-headed transom lights. Sixth floor windows do not have transom lights.

Both segmental and round-headed arched window openings on the north facade are surmounted by two courses of brick headers with a single course of sawtooth brickwork. The second through fifth floor flat arch window openings are defined by a soldier course of bricks surmounted by a rectangular panel of molded and pressed terra-cotta tile. At the sixth floor the brick soldier course is surmounted by four courses of corbeled brickwork.

The four southern windows of the eastern lightwell are two-over-two light, double-hung windows. The two northern windows, which light the stairwell, have two-over-one double-hung sash with two-light segmentally arched transoms. These windows step down with the interior stairway.

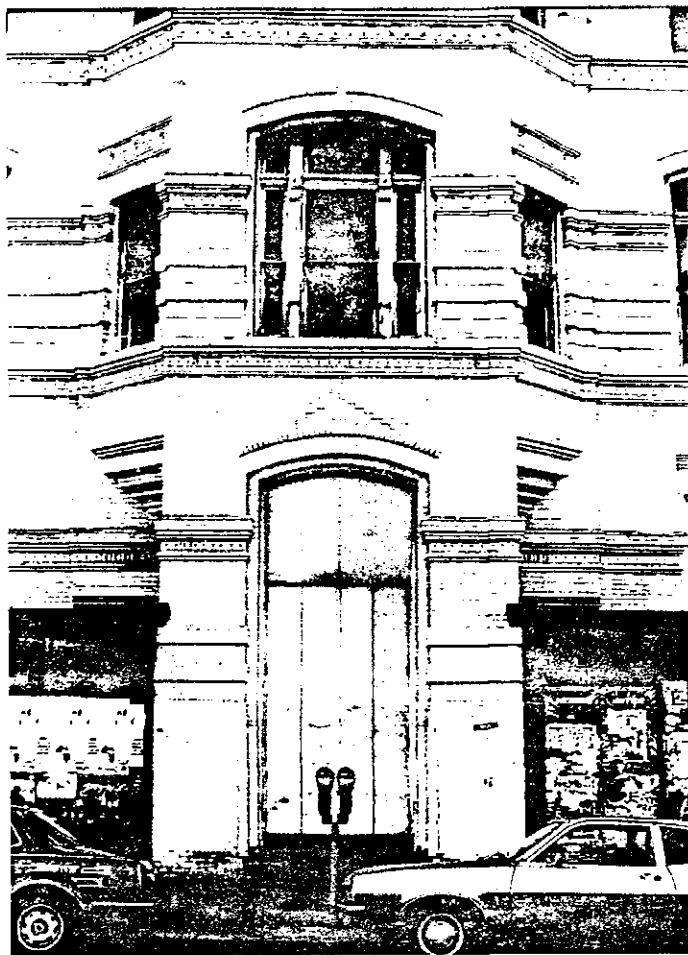
Interior: The interior of the Busch Building retains several original finishes. The structure's original narrow wood flooring remains visible on all but the basement and sixth floors. The basement has a terrazzo floor overlaid with vinyl asbestos tile. Portions of the floors throughout the rest of the building are clad in vinyl asbestos tile, quarry tile and parquet flooring. The original plaster walls and ceilings are still visible, although they have been replaced by gypsum board and acoustic tiles in some areas.

There are two unusual features on the interior of the building: The original wood wainscoting with vertical bead and board paneling remains in the first through third floor halls and in the stairwell. Although the early lighting fixtures have been replaced throughout the building, floral-patterned plaster medallions remain on the second through fifth floor ceilings, marking the location of the original pendant fixtures. In addition, most of the original doors and windows, with their molded architraves, are still in place.

July 1981



Composite View of Facade



Detail of Entrance



Corbeling Detail at Bay Projection



Detail of Clerestory Above Original Show Windows

Lot 11 (Sublot 805)
710 E Street

Lot 11, a rectangular lot, measured 50' x 100' when originally platted. It was located in a northwest quadrant of Square 431 (Bastert Plat Map, 1872).

1819.....The lot was assessed to George Sweeny.

1824.....William W. Seaton was assessed \$950.00 for his lot, and \$6,000.00 for improvements.

1829/33...Seaton's lot assessment had risen to \$1,250.00.

1844.....\$2,000.00 was Seaton's lot assessment.

1855.....The lot assessment was \$6,250.00, still in Seaton's name.

1870.....The lot was titled to H.S. Davis. No assessment was recorded.

1870

to

1880.....Between these years, Schutter and Rackman, artists, A.N. Zevely, a lawyer, and H.R. Searle, an architect, were listed tenants (City Directories).

1872/73...Davis' lot assessment had risen sharply to \$15,000.00

1880.....A permit issued on May 24 was issued to build a frame balcony measuring 22.6' x 5.3' x 2' with a tin roof (Permit #1481; Cost: \$500.00; Owner: Ed Abner).

On August 3rd of this same year a permit was issued to extend the building toward the west (Permit #131; Owner: Ed Abner).

1890.....An original building permit was issued for the construction of the "Busch Building", a six-story brick "I"-shaped structure measuring 59' x 116'. Architect: Paul Schulze (Building Permit #601, 9/11/1890. Cost: \$65,000.00).

1891

to

1914.....No tenants were listed in the City Directories.

1892.....The Hopkins Plat Map indicated the elimination of the southern party wall and partial razing of the western party wall, providing access between the "Concordia" and "Busch" buildings.

1893/94...A tax assessment confirmed the transfer of ownership to Anhauser Busch Brewing Association, with a ground value of \$20,000.00 and improvement value of \$60,000.00.

1899/

1900.....The brewing associations ground and improvement values had decreased to \$18,750.00 and \$50,000.00, respectively.

1902.....An elevator was installed within the existing stairwell (Building Permit #105, 7/6/1902). Other repairs included roof alteration and interior wood girders and columns replaced with iron. (Building Permit #2185, 7/26/1902. Cost: \$7,000.00.)

1915

to

1920.....The City Directories listed the Board of Indian Commission, the Bureau of Mines and the Agriculture Department as tenants.

1921.....The structure was listed as administrative offices by Lansburgh's. The department store closed its doors in 1973.

A December 17 Building Permit (#21528) was granted to Lansburgh and Bro. to make repairs and alterations (new connecting bridges), at a cost of \$15,000.00.

1937.....A June 16 Building Permit (#203,441) granted Lansburgh to remove curtain brick walls and install structural steel, and make other minor repairs. Value: \$18,000.00.

1979

to

1981.....The building has been vacant.

SOURCES

Baist Real Estate Atlas

Bastert and Enthoffer Plat Maps

Boyd's City Directories

District of Columbia Building Permits

District of Columbia General Assessment Records

District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds

District of Columbia Surveyor's Office Records

District of Columbia Tax Records

Hopkins Real Estate Atlas

Polk's City Directories

Property Map for Downtown Urban Renewal Area for District of Columbia Redevelopment
Land Agency

Sanborn Insurance Map